

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

3,5A 1. A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, comprising:  
providing a mixture consisting essentially of a reducing sugar and optionally a hydroxide of an alkali metal;  
subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful caramel composition;  
applying said flavorful composition to a tobacco leaf or cut filler made thereof;  
and  
preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco leaf or cut filler.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said mixture consists essentially of a reducing sugar and a hydroxide of an alkali metal.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said hydroxide is sodium hydroxide.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said reducing sugar is fructose.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 175°C.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the heat treatment is conducted under a pressure of from about 20 psig to about 500 psig.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the heat treatment is conducted for a period of at least about 10 minutes.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein said flavorful composition is applied at an amount of from about 5% to about 8% by weight based on the total dry weight of the tobacco leaf or cut filler in the smoking article.

4B2 10. A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, said method comprising:

- providing a mixture consisting essentially of high fructose corn syrup and sodium hydroxide;
- subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful composition;
- applying said flavorful composition directly to a tobacco material selected from the group consisting of tobacco leaves and cut fillers made thereof; and
- preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 175°C.

12. The method of Claim 10, wherein said flavorful composition is applied at an amount of from about 5% to about 8% by weight based on the total dry weight of the tobacco material in the smoking article.

13. A smoking article prepared by the process of Claim 1.

14. A smoking article prepared by the process of Claim 10.

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